

downstream. Through a complex series of steps that mediate inflammatory events, enzymes trigger the body's normal protective functions and these have been pursued as infective or inflammatory causes of preterm labor. The latest work suggests it is not infection starting the process, but early abnormal complement activation. By measuring serum levels of one of the complement activation fragments (called Bb), the researchers were able to show an association between abnormally high levels and spontaneous preterm delivery prior to 34 weeks of gestation.

It is early days, but a marker of inflammatory action that could predict preterm labor would be an important first step in management protocols. Watch for Bb!

Miscellaneous

Snippets

Reviewed by Athol Kent, MBChB, MPhil, FRCOG

Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, South Africa

[*Rev Obstet Gynecol.* 2009;2(1):68]

© 2009 MedReviews®, LLC

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Events in the Women's Health Initiative: Cohort Study

Lederle FA, Larson JC, Margolis KL, et al.

BMJ. 2008;337:a1724.

Men more frequently develop aortic aneurysms, but they are more deadly in women. Because they are less common in women, they have received less attention, but a study by Lederle and colleagues redresses the situation. Data from 162,000 postmenopausal women showed that increasing age and smoking are risk factors.

Intriguingly, the negative association of diabetes and aneurysms in men was also found in women in this research.

Effects of an Oral Ghrelin Mimetic on Body Composition and Clinical Outcomes in Healthy Older Adults: A Randomized Trial

Nass R, Pezzoli SS, Clancy Oliveri M, et al.

Ann Intern Med. 2008;149:601-611.

Effect of Combined Folic Acid, Vitamin B₆, and Vitamin B₁₂ on Cancer Risk in Women

Zhang SM, Cook NR, Albert CM, et al.

JAMA. 2008;300:2012-2021.

Vitamins E and C in the Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease in Men

Sesso HD, Buring JE, Christen WG, et al.

JAMA. 2008;300:2123-2133.

Exogenous growth hormone increases lean body mass and reduces fat, but has too many side effects to ever be considered as an antiaging medication. MK-677 is a secretagogue that was hoped to have the same benefits without the downside, but it did not have the desired changes in bodily proportions or quality of life. In a study by Nass and colleagues, however, it did make volunteers hungry and they put on more weight than those allocated to placebo.

Folic acid and vitamins B₆ and B₁₂ have crucial roles in DNA metabolism, especially its integrity and gene expression, making them important in cancer prevention. But giving supplements to otherwise healthy women does not reduce cancer risks according to the results of a large US trial of health professionals conducted by Zhang and colleagues; 2.5 mg folate plus 50 mg of vitamin B₆ plus 1 mg of vitamin B₁₂ had the same effect as placebo on rates of breast, colon, or other cancers.

The ongoing US Physicians study recruited 14,000 doctors over 50 years of age; the latest audit reported by Sesso and colleagues shows that giving them vitamin C and E supplements made no difference to their risk of cardiovascular events. All the participants are men, but it is unlikely the effects will be any different for women. ■

These summaries are reproduced from the Journal Article Summary Service, a monthly publication summarizing clinically relevant articles from the recent world literature. Please see <http://www.jassonline.com> or e-mail atholkent@mweb.co.za for more information.
